

The Enquiry into the environmental causes of destitution, like that by Dr John Me Vail into medical relief, drives the same lesson home In January 19073 Mrs Webb notes in her Diary that

"The reports of the Special Investigates are all pointing away from bad administration as *the* cause of pauperism, and towards bad conditions among large classes of the population as the overwhelmingly important factor conditions which, if we are to check destitution, must be changed II we do not see to it that destitution is checked, it is, thanks to Democracy, too late in the day to check pauperism That is the little lesson the COS will have to learn by this Commission "

By July 1906, Mrs Webb was already balancing the question whether she should contemplate writing a separate Report, or try to leaven the lump She notes then—

"My relations with my fellow Commissioners are now quite pleasant I am completely detached from them, and yet on most agreeable terms I just take my own line, attending for just as long as it suits me, cross-examining witnesses to bring out points and conducting the enquiries that I think important independent of the Commission's work The lines of reform, both in constitution and policy, are gradually unfolding themselves to me Whether I shall embody them in a Report of my own, or give up part of my way in order to bring the whole Commission along, will be a question of expediency and delicate negotiation, about which nothing can at present be foreseen "

Early in 1908, Charles Booth was, very unfortunately, compelled, by reasons of health, to retire from the work of the Commission His influence might have been, otherwise, very effective in bringing the "doubtfuls" among the Commissioners over to his side

In the battle of principles on the Report Mrs

Webb
succeeded in detaching to wholehearted
support of her
own line only three of her colleagues
Indeed since
George Lansbury and F H Chandler were
with her from
the start, her one genuine convert was
Prebendary Russell
Wakefield, later Dean of Norwich, and now
Bishop of